

WEEKLY UPDATE – FRIDAY 30TH JANUARY 2026

Letter from Ms Kattirtzi, Headteacher

It was Holocaust Memorial Day on Tuesday 27th January and the practice at Kendrick is that we have a whole school assembly commemorating this day which marks the anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz in January 1945. Our Sixth Form Holocaust Ambassadors, Koyenum and Atika, who visited Auschwitz last year as part of the *Lessons from Auschwitz* programme, joined me in the assembly and presented their 'lessons' to the school. The theme this year is *Bridging Generations*, a call to action and a reminder that the responsibility of remembrance doesn't end with the survivors - it lives on through their children, their grandchildren and through all of us. This theme encourages us all to engage actively with the past - to listen, to learn and to carry those lessons forward. By doing so, we build a bridge between memory and action, between history and hope for the future. As well as the Holocaust Ambassadors and the excellent presentation they gave to the school, I invited a guest speaker, Professor David Brauner, from Reading University to speak about his mother's experiences of life in Poland as a small child when she and her family were evicted from their homes and forced to live in a ghetto with some being sent to the camps. Professor Brauner spoke about the impact of his mother's early life experiences as an adult and on her life and family in England. The trauma of this experience left her anxious in her life. Mrs Brauner died recently and so her son speaking to us at our assembly was a demonstration of *bridging generations* as Professor Brauner was able to speak about his mother and pass on her life experiences to us.

Interestingly this year, we have been reminded by the Secretary of State, Bridgit Philipson to take time to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. She wrote in a letter to Headteachers: '*Learning about the Holocaust is not simply a matter of historical record. It enables young people to recognise prejudice, to challenge discrimination, and to understand the consequences when these go unchecked. The government remains firmly committed to Holocaust education as part of the national curriculum. Due to its significance, we made clear that the Holocaust would remain a compulsory topic in the history curriculum in advance of the response to the Curriculum and Assessment Review*'. The same reminder came from Reading Borough Council Official and an official, Alice Boon visited us and joined our assembly on Tuesday. I am extremely proud of the work we do at Kendrick for Holocaust Memorial Day, in particular our Kendrick Pledge which came out of the first visit we made Auschwitz as a school back in 2010. The Kendrick Pledge Book features in the displays in the library and the vestibule and once again I asked everyone to re-read our pledge, look at the displays and re-confirm their commitment to the values expressed in it and sign the pledge book. You can see some of the work we have done and the displays [here](#).

The Secretary of State wrote to Headteachers again this week, on a theme that I am sure many parents are aware of and that is the use of smart phones in school. In her letter, Bridgit Philipson said

'I have always been clear that mobile phones have no place in schools - I know many of you feel the same. But it is clear that the previous guidance did not deliver the clarity or consistency that schools need, or help enough in setting out for parents that this is a clear national position. That is why we have strengthened it to be explicit - all schools should be phone-free environments for the entire school day. That includes lessons, time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. It means, for example, it is not appropriate for phones to be used as calculators, or for research during lessons.' See accompanying updated [guidance](#).

Because of this recent intervention by the Secretary of State for Education and the publicity it has received, it would seem appropriate that I remind everyone of the guidance and expectations we have at Kendrick regarding mobile phone usage. Currently, our expectations are as follow:

- Students in Year 7-11 must switch off their phones and put them in their bags when they enter the school site. The phone may be kept in their locker or in their bag and must remain off until they leave the school site at the end of the day.
- Sixth Form students must also keep their phones off and in their bags but may use them in defined sixth form areas for study purposes.
- Only students who have medical conditions may use their phones to manage their condition. Special arrangements will have been made with the student and their family for this use.
- Consequences of misuse of mobile phones are applied as appropriate and parents are informed.

With the updated government guidance and the fact that a government enquiry has started on social media for under 16s, we will continue to keep our mobile phone policy and practice under review and make any further changes as required and necessary. Please also look at our [Relationships and Behaviour Policy](#) for more detailed information about mobile phones - Appendix 2 page 12.

In our assembly on Tuesday, I asked students to reflect on the importance of looking at the past and recognising that we can be and do better in our lives. Coincidentally I attended an assembly yesterday taken by 11RR on the theme of reflection. With maturity and in-depth scientific research, 11RR demonstrated the importance of reflection in our lives and made some suggestions about how forms of reflection can help our wellbeing. They suggested journaling, creative outlets and meditation which can help you to become more self-aware, and lead to positive outcomes. Intelligently they linked this outcome to our Kendrick Pledge and how to learn from your mistakes and increase your confidence and resilience. They concluded that it is always important to reflect on the past, whether good or bad, and learn from it. The link to the assembly is [here](#).

Today is Parent Mental Health Day, a day created to raise awareness of the vital link between parents' and carers' mental health and the wellbeing of the whole family. For some practical tools, expert advice and support from Stem4, and also a poster created by our Wellbeing Ambassadors and the KSL Wellbeing Committee, please click [here](#).

To finish as we did at our assembly on Tuesday, please read our [Kendrick Pledge](#) and I hope it helps you understand the ethos and values we try to work by at Kendrick School.

Wishing everyone a peaceful weekend.

Ms Christine Kattirtzi
Headteacher

School Notices

We are pleased to announce that **Episode 2 - Seeing Me: Body Image and Identity** our second episode in the Kendrick School Webinar Series, is now live.

This series aims to inform, support, and strengthen understanding between students, school, and parents by exploring shared perspectives and addressing topics that can sometimes feel challenging. Our hope is that these webinars will foster greater insight, mutual support, and more open dialogue within our school community. The webinars will run throughout the course of the year, with each session lasting approximately 30 minutes, allowing families to engage with the content in a flexible and accessible way.

A reminder that these links can be accessed at any time through either **the link**

<https://youtu.be/lbhKvk1UULY> or **through our school website:**

<https://www.kendrick.reading.sch.uk/page/?title=Kendrick+School+Webinar+Series&pid=369>

We hope you find this webinar informative and engaging. Should you have any feedback or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at shyde@kendrick.reading.sch.uk.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding at Kendrick School

[A guide for parents and carers on managing children's digital lives](#) Parenting today can feel overwhelming — especially when childhood looks so different from what we grew up with. There's no manual, and it can be hard to keep up with the fast-changing digital world your child moves through every day. This guide aims to make those conversations easier and help you support your child with confidence. Source: [Children's Commissioner](#)

Wellbeing

Mental Health and Wellbeing at Kendrick School

Parent Mental Health Day

SEND

[You are not alone drop in for February](#). A free monthly online drop-in for parents and carers.

[Reading Borough Council - Support for children with autism and anxiety \(child aged 6-16\)](#)

School Fund

Please donate to our School Fund [here](#). You can make one-off payments through your ParentPay account or complete a [standing order form](#) for more regular payments. If you are a UK taxpayer, please ensure you also complete a [Gift Aid Form](#).

A school fund is maintained by voluntary contributions from the parents/carers of students. Its purpose is to provide an additional source of funding for the provision of facilities and educational resources for the benefit of students. We use our School Fund to support so many activities **in and out of school** that have now become essential to school life.

Canteen

The menu for Autumn/Winter can be found [here](#). The menu is subject to change dependent on food availability. **Please ensure that you regularly check your child's canteen balance on their ParentPay account and settle any 'overdrafts' quickly.** Overdrafts should only be issued on an exceptional basis and not as a regular occurrence.

Latest News on our Website

[German Study Dy at Goethe Institut](#)

[Holocaust Memorial Day 2026 – Bridging the Gap](#)

School Calendar

Week commencing 26th January - Week A

- Wednesday 4th February – Year 10 Parents' Consultation
- Thursday 5th February – Time to Talk Day; Year 10 Hitler on Trial trip; Year 13 leaving photos; KPS Year 8 &9 Online Drop-Ins with Ms Kattirtzi and Miss Hyde
- Friday 6th February – KPS Year 9 Disco

Student Careers and Work Experience

Current Opportunities

Vacancies

Mathematics Teacher to cover a maternity leave for September 2026. Closing date for applications: 9am Thursday 29th January 2026. Currently shortlisting.

We will shortly be advertising for a **School Caretaker**. More information will be circulated next week.

ParentPay and Evolve Reminders

Reminders on Friday 30th January 2026

Kendrick Parents' Society (KPS)

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